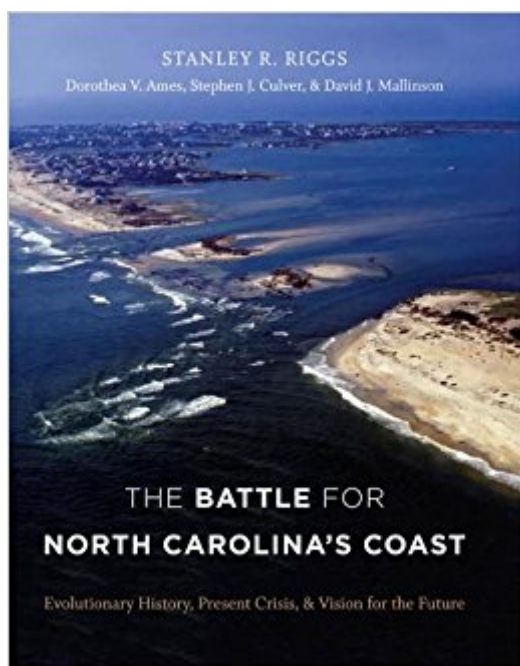


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# The Battle For North Carolina's Coast: Evolutionary History, Present Crisis, And Vision For The Future



## Synopsis

The North Carolina barrier islands, a 325-mile-long string of narrow sand islands that forms the coast of North Carolina, are one of the most beloved areas to live and visit in the United States. However, extensive barrier island segments and their associated wetlands are in jeopardy. In *The Battle for North Carolina's Coast*, four experts on coastal dynamics examine issues that threaten this national treasure. According to the authors, the North Carolina barrier islands are not permanent. Rather, they are highly mobile piles of sand that are impacted by sea-level rise and major storms and hurricanes. Our present development and management policies for these changing islands are in direct conflict with their natural dynamics. Revealing the urgency of the environmental and economic problems facing coastal North Carolina, this essential book offers a hopeful vision for the coast's future if we are willing to adapt to the barriers' ongoing and natural processes. This will require a radical change in our thinking about development and new approaches to the way we visit and use the coast. Ultimately, we cannot afford to lose these unique and valuable islands of opportunity. This book is an urgent call to protect our coastal resources and preserve our coastal economy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Readers will walk away with a deep understanding of the forces that created and continue to rework North Carolina's unsettled coast.--Raleigh News and Observer  
An exceptional, affordable book with clear prose, succinct logic, a fine bibliography, and 72 superb color illustrations . . . . Riggs and

colleagues offer a reasonable plan that, if implemented soon, will protect the natural shore system and mitigate its erosion rates, as well as nourish North Carolina's resource-based coastal economy over the long term. Highly recommended.--ChoiceRiggs and his co-authors deserve a lot of credit for their ideas. Hopefully somebody will take them seriously.--Lawyers, Guns and Money blogThe authors make you feel being physically on the North Carolina barrier islands, and they make you see how both gradual processes and events shape the barriers, erode inlets, close inlets again, etc.--Geologos"The real strength of *The Battle for North Carolina's Coast* is the numerous photographs, diagrams, and maps (most of which are in color) that do an excellent job of illustrating North Carolina's coastal dynamics. . . . It would be difficult to find authors better acquainted with the geology of this particular coastline.--Environmental History

*The Battle for North Carolina's Coast* provides a flood tide of fascinating insights based on decades of keen observation and scientific research. It is a must read to fully understand our dynamic North Carolina coast and its future.--Todd Miller, executive director, North Carolina Coastal FederationA must read for anyone interested in the future of coastal communities. Riggs and his colleagues, through careful research, document the dynamic nature of our coastlines. They also point the way towards a new appreciation of the value of preserving barrier islands, estuarine marshes, and coastal wetlands in their natural condition. Saving land at the coast does more than preserve places of beauty and habitat for wildlife; it protects us, our families, and our communities from the costs and hazards of unwise development.--Camilla M. Herlevich, executive director, North Carolina Coastal Land Trust*The Battle for North Carolina's Coast* clearly identifies the potential effects of sea-level rise on North Carolina's coast and answers the question 'Why should I care?' about policy decisions and coastal management. This is an important educational book for the general public and decision-makers to read.--Betsy Bennett, director, North Carolina Museum of Natural SciencesNo oceanographic group in the country knows more about any North American coastal segment than this group under the leadership of Stan Riggs, whose 40 year career of study has made him a North Carolina state treasure and a coastal icon. This fascinating and informative book provides the field evidence of past sea-level rises for all to see. Through the book's beautiful aerial photos the mysteries of how barrier islands and beaches work are revealed, and we are reminded that the coast is actively evolving as the sea level rise accelerates. The authors emphasize that the past is the key to the future and urge us to prepare for sea level rise now. We must listen to them.--Orrin H. Pilkey, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus, Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University

Excellent book on coastal dynamics with numerous examples for the NC shore. Maybe a bit technical for some, but if you're interested in the topic, it's hard to envision a better book for the educated general reader. Lots of photos, charts and graphics that illustrate the authors' main points.

If you live in Eastern NC, or use its beautiful waters and beaches, you need to read this book. The book starts with a thorough history of the NC coast's geologic history, shows how our unique barrier island/estuary coast has evolved, and discusses in detail the forces that are shaping it today. The final section of the book details how our current cycle of development (roads, bridges, high-rises) along the coast is inconsistent with the reality of barrier islands that are moving inexorably to the west. The authors make some predictions about how the coast will evolve over the next 100 years, and point out the policy agenda that needs to be worked if we are to avoid major financial and environmental losses. The authors of "The Battle for North Carolina's Coast" have been studying the geology of the NC coast for more than forty years, and have an in-depth knowledge of how our coast came to be and how it's currently being shaped by storms, and rising sea levels. The book is short (130 pages), to the point, and profusely illustrated with charts and photos. Although technically deep, it is very accessible to non-geologist readers. An important book!

Stan Riggs and his associates have written a great book based on several decades of hard, practical science. The historic, present and future situation of our coast is accurately presented, backed up by fact-based analysis. The maps, charts and photographs are copious and well-suited to the text. The authors successfully dodge the politically-charged issue of whether "man-caused" global warming is responsible for the ongoing flooding of eastern NC. The fact is that the sea level has risen and continues to rise, whatever the cause or rate, and is likely to continue to do so for a long time based on the historic record. The results of sea rise are inexorable. As a resident of coastal NC, and one who does NOT believe in the "man-caused" part of global warming, there is nevertheless an important message here for us all. The book promotes one of several possible solutions to adapt the economic life of coastal NC to the rise in sea level and resultant changes to the topography of the region. Not sure if I agree with all of their proposed solution, but for certain the authors gave it serious thought. This book should get a lot of people to thinking about the future of this area. I enjoyed the book and have bought several copies for friends.

The debate over whether to nourish beaches, maintain Highway 12 in Hatteras and what type of development we should allow over the next 70 years on these islands is viewed by these authors as

a discussion that should include an understanding of our geological past and present. Many will reject the suggestions of these scientists, but everyone living on the Outer Banks should read this book and at least consider some of the authors' warnings and interpretations of our future.

I purchased this blindly as a Christmas gift for my Carolina real estate loving husband. He had it finished by the end of the day and even missed the Dr. Who Christmas special to read it. He thought it was fairly presented and learned a lot. It is not a fluffy read, but worth it to those who love the Carolina coast whether they want to save it, build on it or both.

Delivery was fast, book is very informative on NC coast.

If you love NC's coastline and you care about preserving it, you should read it. If you don't care about environmental issues, you should read it too. Either way, it's a MUST read.

I'm not sure if I'd recommend this book as a fun read (unless you have a strange idea of fun - like me) but Dr. Riggs and his co-authors do a great job of laying out the basics of barrier island geology and describing the specific situation of the Outer Banks. Parts of it can be a bit of a slog for the general reader, but it's not hard core science writing, and the slog factor is offset by the dozens of relevant and high-quality illustrations, many of them in color. I'd go for the hardcover rather than the Kindle version - whoever did the actual layout, production and printing did a truly stellar job. It's a fairly compact little book, but the quality is worthy of a coffee table book. So, about the contents... Barrier islands are fairly complicated creatures, but they're ultimately shifting sandbars. Human attempts to stabilize them and build permanent structures on them will inevitably end in tears. Especially in light of rising sea levels and subsiding land on the Carolina coast, we need to come up with a new vision for how to inhabit the Outer Banks, because what we are doing now is not going to work for much longer. That's the bulk of the book summarized in a paragraph. In the final chapter, you get the vision of Riggs and his co-authors, a sort of orderly retreat which would involve abandoning the eternal attempts to repair route 12, allowing a good chunk of the Banks to go natural (which means some of it would go away), and preserving six key villages as a "string of pearls" for low-impact tourism. This strikes me as an extremely good plan, although I'll note that I'm not an urban planner. I can also understand why it's an idea that horrifies many people who live on the Banks, own property there, or run businesses there. The authors do an excellent job with the science. The prose does not always sparkle, but by the time I finished I'd learned many new things

about barrier islands in general and the Banks specifically, and I already knew a reasonable amount about both subjects. I bought this book after it was mentioned in an article about the latest OB controversies in the Washington Post. Seems there was an abortive attempt to base zoning and land use decisions on our best estimate of sea level rise by 2100. Sadly, this estimate is over 3 feet - with some possibility of considerably higher totals. If we started basing coastal land use decisions on these estimates, it would make billions of dollars of coastal property almost worthless, including much of the development on the Banks. Oops. I was struck by the pleas of one OB homeowner who told the Post that he just wanted a "reasonable" approach. Anyone can relate to that desire. Sadly (or not) nature kinda doesn't care much about what seems reasonable to us humans. This book convinced me that maybe within my lifetime and certainly within most of our kids' lifetimes, the Outer Banks is going to be a very different sort of place, regardless of what humans think or do. Books like this, and the controversies that surround them, are going to grow much more numerous in the years to come. Whether you are a believer in human caused climate change or believe that rising sea levels are just nature doing her thing we're going to have to make some very difficult decisions in the years to come.

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